THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART CMA

The Cleveland Museum of Art

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Press Release

GALLERY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE ART CLOSES FOR RENOVATION AS THE ROBERT P. BERGMAN GALLERY

September Opening to be Celebrated with Conference in Bergman's Memory

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Museum of Art's gallery of Early Christian and Byzantine art closed recently for major renovation. When it reopens the weekend of Sept. 15–16, 2000, it will be named the Robert P. Bergman Gallery in memory of the museum's fifth director, who died suddenly last spring. The occasion will be celebrated with a **free** public conference on *The Museum and the Community* featuring internationally prominent museum leaders.

The museum's selection of this gallery as a memorial to Bergman and the planning of the conference reflect the late director's scholarly expertise in medieval art and architecture — especially his interest in the Early Christian and Byzantine periods — and his passion for presenting the world of art to the widest possible audience. Museum directors and other renowned scholars will travel from across the United States to present their papers, which will be simulcast on the museum's web site, **www.clemusart.com**.

Evan M. Maurer, director and president of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, is honorary chair of the symposium, which he is co-organizing with Cleveland Museum of Art deputy director **Kate M. Sellers**. Maurer will present "Bringing Art to Life for Everyone — 12 Years at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts."

Other presenters are as follows: keynote speaker **Neil Harris**, the Preston and Sterling Morton Professor of History, University of Chicago, "The American Art Museum and Its Publics: An Historical Summary"; **James Cuno**, the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, "Art Museums, Antiquities and the Public's Interest"; **Hugh M. Davies**, the David C. Copley Director, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, "Bordering on Biculturalism: Making a Museum for San Diego and Tijuana"; **Dorothy F. Glass**, president, International Center of Medieval Art, New York, "Civic Pride and Civic Responsibility in Medieval Siena"; **Arnold L. Lehman**, director, Brooklyn Museum of Art, "Where's the Other?"; **Glenn D. Lowry**, director, Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Museums and Their Communities: Art and the

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Public Trust"; **Gary Vikan**, director, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, "Jesus as a Man of Color: The Role of Museums in Presenting Religion in Art"; **Dan Weiss**, chairman, Art History Department, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, "Sacred Art and Civic Rule in Gothic Paris"; and **William D. Wixom**, curator emeritus of medieval art and The Cloisters at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "A Grand Tradition: Selective Collecting of Early Christian and Byzantine Art for Cleveland."

The gallery under renovation houses such masterpieces of the collection as the so-called *"Jonah Marbles"* — a famous group of three-dimensional sculptures from the 3rd century that include images of the biblical story of Jonah and a related series of paired busts; the unique 6th-century tapestry *Icon of the Virgin*; the 11th-century ivory plaque depicting the *Mother of God Enthroned with Angels*, sometimes called the "Strogonoff" or "Cleveland" ivory. One of the most important recent additions to this gallery was acquired early in Bergman's tenure as director: portions of a necklace of gold and semi-precious stones from the time of Constantine (AD 324–326).

To date, 250 donors have contributed to the Robert P. Bergman Memorial Fund that will support the renovation and endowment of the gallery. Of these, 16 are contributions of $100,000 and greater. These leadership gifts have been made by Mr. and Mrs. James T. Bartlett, Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Bolton, Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Carter, the F.J. O'Neill Charitable Corporation, Sally and Bob Gries, Ms. Agnes Gund and Mr. Daniel Shapiro, Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Horvitz, Mr. and Mrs. James D. Ireland III, Mr. Peter B. Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. Jon A. Lindseth, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Mavec, Mr. and Mrs. James A. Reid, Mr. and Mrs. William R. Robertson, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin M. Roth, The Sherwick Fund and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Sherwin.

A fresh, new presentation in the Early Christian and Byzantine gallery will highlight the relationships among the 140 works of art, revealing fundamental trends including discoveries of recent scholarship. The new gallery design will reflect the sumptuousness and majesty of Byzantine art and increase understanding and accessibility to the objects — points that were critical to Bergman's thinking. New exhibition cases and state-of-the-art lighting will be used, including vitrines for the renowned marbles that will permit viewing them from all sides.

The seminar will be free, but tickets will be required. Information about ticketing will be available during the summer by calling **1-888-CMA-0033** or visiting **www.clemusart.com**.

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